

Job stress? Get rid of it.

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Stress on the job is a common phenomenon around the globe. It more widely exists in our corporate culture. We are trying to set up a friendly corporate culture through designing and reshaping corporate structure, keeping pace with the globe. In some cases, we are successful, but almost in all cases, the mental set up and change of attitude and outlook are yet to materialise.

We are struggling to sustain in the race to attain our organisational targets, following all rules and regulations, adaptations and reforms set by our organisation. On the other hand, it has been a tough struggle in our life to find a balance between our achievements and expectations, both in corporate and personal life.

There are a few tools that we can use for an uplift in job without taking too much stress. These are as follows.

1. It is more important to know the art of enjoying ones job. Our main problem is that we do not enjoy our job. In personal life, we find our life meaningful and inspiring if we can enjoy our life. Likewise, if we know how to enjoy our job, we will be able to continue our job with renewed vigor and inspiration even after confronted by conflicts at work.

2. Academic distinctions are not good enough. We have to learn the job or industry related rules, regulations and knowledge, which differ from academic syllabuses. We must not pretend to know everything. There is no excuse for ignorance. On the other hand, if we have proper knowledge, no one can draw us in the wrong direction.

3. Our colleagues are our friends. We must not suspect or neglect our colleagues. But sometimes we have to be vigilant. Many honest and promising employees have lost their

jobs by sharing sensitive, confidential information, like computer passwords, with their colleagues and by trusting their unscrupulous colleagues.

4. We should not be a direct follower of a particular leader. Rather, we have to follow how and what a good leader leads. We must learn the good qualities of an ideal leader, while some are already embedded in ourselves inherently. Our qualities will enable us to lead the organisation when needed.

5. True success lies in how successfully a leader has groomed his/her successors. We must not only develop ourselves but also create opportunities for our successors to develop themselves and take on leadership in due time. Some people fear their own prosperity if subordinates get smarter or much efficient. But it has been observed that competent subordinates can contribute a lot to the superior's achievement or success.

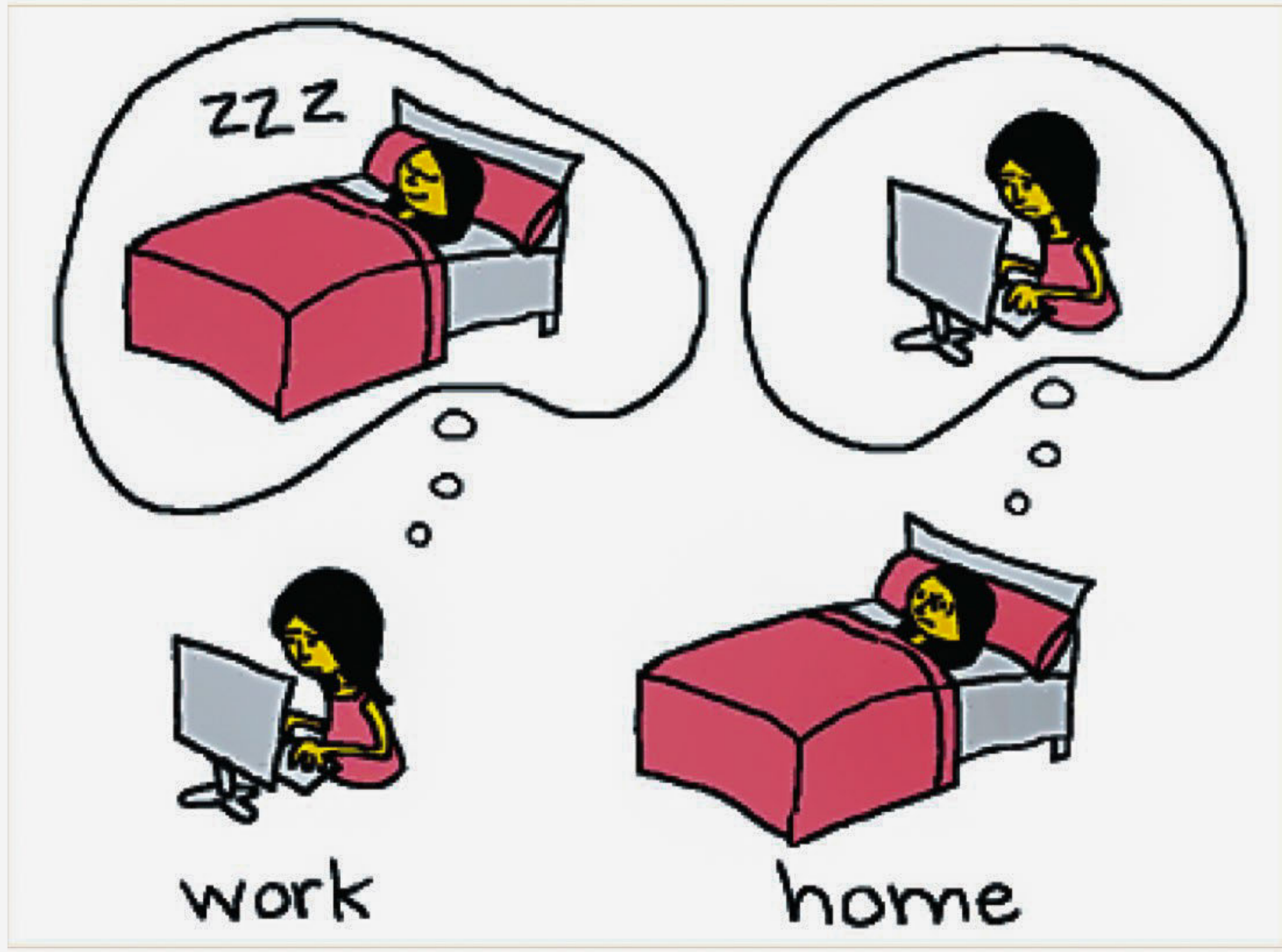
6. It is virtuous to grow more polite and positive with progress in job titles and power.

7. The subordinate should be deployed and inspired in such a way that he/she is self-motivated to make up for the deficiencies or lacking in them. Subordinates also have to be praised for their achievements and both responsibility and authority has to be given for quick disposal of decisions.

8. We should love our organisation and be loyal towards our job and duties. Loyalty towards our boss is not the main thing; it is to our organisation.

9. We should try to build our own brand. It has sometimes been seen that an individual's image and personality has brought on a positive impression over the organisation.

10. It is useless trying to create popularity at work, which is not much required. Right decisions, correct supervision and doing the right thing are valued



in corporate life. The person who is for everyone, is for no one. He promises something but does something else. So rather than being popular, we should try to be an effective administrator.

11. We become restless for career progression, switching organisations for a superior position. Quick progression in career may not make them competent enough to take responsibilities or lead an organisation. Matured and experienced employees should be put in superior positions.

12. We need to earn the skills that will enable us to match our job and personal life. By learning to utilise our merit, knowledge, power and skill to disseminate workloads, we can segment our job according to time

and perform better. 13. Growth and progress of our classmates or previous colleagues should not frustrate us. People who are meritorious, brave, confident and ready to take risks go ahead of time.

14. Sharing views and opinion is the most convenient way to learn. We better not be rigid with our own knowledge.

15. Sometimes we have to be an extrovert and a self-starter. By expressing our qualities and work portfolio, we are letting higher management know about our competencies. Employees who are introverts, in spite of having merit, can be miss appraised or can not be evaluated properly.

16. Follow corporate language in carrying conversations in office. It may create an image

or standard about the organisation.

17. To learn from our seniors, we have to be tactful. We have to earn their trust. Sycophancy is not an option. Again not all bosses like flattery.

18. Individuals should not try to manipulate others by using backup, power or personal influence. Colleagues try to avoid these kinds of people and never feel comfortable sharing anything with them. Again, when those personal influences diminish, things might take an opposite turn.

19. We should take a break from our job and enjoy a vacation for at least a couple of weeks a year. With no stress or tension, surely we will return feeling recharged.

20. The merit and extra efforts of colleagues should be utilised only for institutional development, not for personal purposes.

21. Treat the organisation as an organisation. There should be no mix-up with a personal equity.

I am neither an academician, nor a specialist. I have not translated any write up. All the opinions mentioned above are borrowed from my experience in service. I will feel happy if it helps anyone in his/her professional life. I believe there is no right time to do any right thing. Any time is good for starting up a good idea. Lets start it now.

The writer is the senior vice president and head of branch of Prime Bank Ltd.

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'Little Italy' rises on Philippine hillside

AFP, Mabini, Philippines

On an isolated hillside in the Philippines, a tiny slice of Italy has risen from among the vegetable patches and coconut trees, the product of thousands of overseas workers.

Large stone houses -- often with brand-new vehicles in their driveways -- cover the district, even though the narrow streets can barely accommodate more than one car at a time.

This is a sharp contrast to the lifestyle in the 1980s, recalled district chairman Raymundo Magsino, 63.

"Back then, we depended on farming: vegetables, fruit and corn. We were the poorest district in the province. These were all just thatch huts," Magsino said, pointing to the pastel-coloured houses that dot the hilly area.

This new wealth comes from the remittances of residents who have gone to Italy to work, turning a district of subsistence farmers into a relatively prosperous community in a generation.

About 6,300 people from the town's total population of 47,000 have made the trip, said Aileen Constantino-Penas, programme director of a non-government organisation for migrant workers in Mabini.

The money sent home from Italy by Filipinos doing mostly domestic work and labouring has completely changed the face of Mabini town, located about 65 kilometres south of Manila.

Those who have left have brought touches of Italy back



A general view of row of large stone houses at a village popularly known as "Little Italy", in Mabini, Batangas province, south of Manila, owned by an overseas Filipino now working in Italy.

with them.

"The accents of their homes are no longer typical of Filipino homes," Constantino-Penas said.

Italian-style large terraces or wrap-around porches with marble balusters proliferate in Mabini, some with exteriors covered with artificial stone. Other houses look like mini-Pantheons, complete with Roman-style columns in front.

Traces of Italy can also be found inside the houses, even in the bathrooms. Bidets are common here even though they are unheard of elsewhere in the Philippines.

And when speaking among

themselves, those from Italy sometimes use Italian words including the occasional "Mama Mia" exclamation, said Constantino-Penas, whose relatives are also among the workers in Italy.

Going abroad to seek higher-paying work is nothing unusual in the Philippines: nine million people, or about 10 percent of the population, are currently labouring abroad. The people of Mabini have found Italy to be especially welcoming.

District chairman Magsino said some people made the journey to Italy as early as 1977. Working in Italy really caught on in the 1980s as word spread of

the opportunities there, luring even more Mabini residents.

"People who have relatives there talked to (prospective) Italian employers and told them that (their relatives) will work for you so they fixed the papers to bring them in," Magsino said.

Luciana Hernandez, 81, said she was one of the pioneers of the exodus to Italy, having helped arrange for her daughter to go there to work in 1986, back when that meant sneaking into Italy from Austria or the former Yugoslavia.

"An agency took her by plane (to Europe). Then by speedboat, then they crossed the mountains on foot, hiding all the

time," she recalled.

Once her daughter was established in Italy, she was able to petition for the rest of her siblings to go there, where they also obtained jobs, said Hernandez.

Eventually all but one of Hernandez's 10 children went off to work in Italy. Most of them are still there and have taken their own children with them, she said.

"When they first left, I cried every time I thought of them," she said.

Life as a foreign worker in Italy is easier than in other countries, say those who have worked there. While tales of abused Filipino maids proliferate in many countries, Filipinos in Italy enjoy legal protection and many of them get along well with their hosts, they say.

"Italy is a better place, even if you are just a domestic helper. They treat you well and even give you insurance for hospitalisation," said Alona Solis, 39, who first went to Italy when she was 16 years old.

"They are not allowed to hurt you. You can complain about abuse, unlike some other countries."

Since she left for Italy in 1986, she has returned to the Philippines only twice: once in 2005 to get married and last December for a vacation that she is still enjoying. But she plans to go back to Italy soon.

"I am used to working there. My boss there already sees me as his child," she said.

Her husband also has a job in Italy and they share an apartment with her two young chil-

dren, said Solis, who can speak Italian.

Solis can earn as much as 1,000 euros a month (1,350 dollars) as a domestic helper if she works overtime, far more than she could ever get in the Philippines as a high-school drop-out.

"If the educated people have trouble finding a job here, how much more the uneducated."

Despite the wealth brought by the Italian ventures, officials concede that there are costs to having so many people from the community working outside the country.

Magsino, the district chairman, said family members left behind had become dependent on the remittances of their relatives.

Constantino-Penas said her non-government organisation, Atikha, had been working to teach the overseas workers how to manage their money and to make sure their relatives at home didn't suffer the ill-effects of separation.

"There is a social cost of migration. Children left behind don't want to study. Their mindset is they should go abroad and not study. We see a lot of drop-outs, most of them among overseas workers' children," she said.

Her organisation is teaching children to stay in school, to save their money rather than spend it.

Meanwhile, Mabini tourism officer Pacencia Casapao has struggled against the apathy lingering over the town in her effort to give it more touches of Italy.

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